

# Citizens' Assessment of the Municipal Services Provided by Mymensingh City Corporation

<sup>1</sup>Sharmin Begum & <sup>2</sup>Tanjil Ahmed

## Abstract

City Corporations, which are crucial in defining the urban environment, have a significant impact on the quality of life of their residents. Hence, this study aims to explore citizens' assessment and satisfaction with the different services provided by Mymensingh City Corporation. Employing an exploratory research approach, the study gathers quantitative data through surveys. The findings of the study revealed that 24% of participants strongly agreed that the Mymensingh City Corporation upholds the Citizen Charter while providing services, 38% were satisfied with the MCC's present services, 12% claimed to have participated in the MCC decision-making process, 22% concurred that the MCC demonstrates an adequate level of transparency and accountability in its operations, 24% were satisfied with the MCC's efforts to preserve public safety and civil defense, and 38% said that the MCC had done a good job of upholding urban planning. These statistics clearly indicate that MCC has enough scope to improve its overall performance regarding enhancing citizen satisfaction. Since the survey was conducted during the pandemic, it has restricted gathering data from an adequate number of respondents. However, there is a scope for further research by applying a mixed method with a large sample size. Finally, necessary policy recommendations have been discussed in the study that may improve the performance of the MCC.

**Keywords:** *citizens' assessment, municipal services, citizen charter, urban planning, accountability and transparency, Bangladesh*

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## 1. Introduction

Bangladesh will be among the top three fastest-growing economies by 2030, and now it is considered one of the top emerging economies in the world (Economic Relations Division, 2021). Bangladesh has been undergoing massive urbanization because of its speedy and sustained economic progress (Chandan, 2017). At present, 39.71 percent of the total population of Bangladesh lives in urban areas (World Bank, 2023). However, numerous issues are invading towns and cities as a result of the rapid migration of rural residents to cities and the unchecked population growth. In fact, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) is facing complexities providing public services to the growing population in the cities (Hasan, 2022).

In Bangladesh, civic services are provided through local government bodies (urban and rural). The urban local government comprises city corporations and municipalities (*Pourashavas*), which are vital parts of the delivery of services to people residing in cities and towns. On the other hand, municipalities and city corporations have the capacity to generate sufficient revenues and largely depend on budgetary transfers from the central government of Bangladesh (Bhuiyan, 2011). Though city corporations have their own budgets, the tremendous needs of population and limited fiscal support act as a barrier to operating and maintaining the desired level of services at urban local government (Bhattacharya et al., 2013). As the rate of urbanization increases, citizens' demands for urban services from the government are also increasing promptly. To address the issue, the GoB has established a total of 12 city corporations and 328 municipal corporations to ensure better management of the city structure and public services (LGED, 2019). Though there is a threat of massive resource crises and overpopulation, several city corporations and *Pourashavas* in the country have reputation of exemplary practices (Chandan, 2017). The innovations in the public service delivery system have made a notable change in city corporations and municipalities (Kernaghan, 2011).

The 'Vision 2021' of 'Digital Bangladesh' has empowered local government institutions to provide services and information in minimum time with low cost. As the government has established e-service delivery networks at the local level in both urban and rural areas, it has promoted an acceleration in service efficiency (Amin et al., 2022). The convenient access to services and information with digitalized delivery systems resulted to a mindset of transparency and accountability in the urban citizens (Hasan, 2016). Hence, the

authorities of municipalities and city corporations are now recognized for their good work in some sectors.

The government has taken initiatives to solve the age-old problems of several institutions and tried to build their capacities to fulfil citizens' demands and consequently assure sustainable urban development. However, it is essential to identify how far municipalities and city corporations are ensuring better services to their respected citizens (Afroj et al., 2021). Therefore, this study focused on citizens' assessment regarding the services provided by the City Corporations of Bangladesh, specifically the newly formed Mymensingh City Corporation (MCC), as part of the urban local government, and evaluated how they provide and ensure public services to citizens. In this context, it measured the citizens' assessment of the municipal services provided by the MCC through analyzing the existing service delivery practices and evaluating the extent of citizens' satisfaction with the services. In addition, the citizens were also asked recommendations to improve the services of the MCC.

## **2. Literature review**

### ***2.1. Structure and service delivery of local government***

The government body that deals mainly with difficulties or issues connected to a certain population within a particular territory under the authorization of the central government is called local government (Aurora, 2016). The constitution of Bangladesh defines local government as an administrative unit that shall be entrusted to bodies and composed of elected persons based on the law (Parliamentary Affairs and Law, 2020). Urban government refers to the process of governance where the government (elected representatives) and stakeholders decide how to prepare a plan and execute the plan for ensuring sustainable development (William, 2020). According to UNESCAP and UN-Habitat, urban government is a body that contains a range of actors and organizations for ensuring urban development. It determines the strategic planning for the development of urban areas like road and traffic management, drainage, and other development (UN-Habita, 2010).

In Bangladesh, the local government is divided into two broad categories, urban local government and rural local government. Essentially, in towns and cities, urban local government (municipality and City Corporation) is playing a noteworthy role in ensuring the civic services of its huge population and maintaining the standard of living. The urban local

government of Bangladesh is composed of two tiers: city corporations and *Pourashava* (Jamil & Panday, 2012). City Corporation is an urban government institution that consists of several wards and is headed by an elected people's representative. The corporation is headed by an authority named 'Mayor' who is directly elected by the citizens of certain urban areas. In addition, a group of councilors was also elected from each ward under the corporation (Ahsan, 2012). In the Local Government (City Corporation) Act 2009, the functions of city corporations are stipulated to be pertinent to the needs of citizens and urban development. However, these functions need to be carried out in an acceptable manner to ensure better services to citizens.

The GoB has established a total of 12 city corporations and 328 municipal corporations to ensure better management of city structures and public services (LGED, 2019). The 'Local Government (City Corporation) Act 2009' outlines urban services in Bangladesh in 28 broad categories, including public health; birth, death, and matrimonial registration; medical facilities; water supply and sanitation; ferry facilities; local market and slaughterhouse management; town planning; building construction; road development; traffic control; public security; disaster management; graveyard and crematorium management; and public transportation (Sddiqui, 2008; Afroj et al., 2021). For instance, the Local Government Department (LGD) and Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) conducted several urban development projects with financial help from various development partners and government funds to strengthen the service delivery of municipalities and city corporations (LGED, 2018).

The present urban local government system of Bangladesh is presented in table 1. There is a separate set of local governments based on urban and rural areas. Urban local government institutions are called city corporations and *Pourashava*.

**Table 1**

*Urban Local Government System of Bangladesh*

Level/Unit	Name	Headed by	Election method	Revenue authority
Mega City	City Corporation	Elected Mayor	Direct Election	Yes
Small City/Town	Municipality ( <i>Pourashava</i> )	Elected Mayor	Direct Election	Yes
Cantonment area	Cantonment Board	Government Nominated Chairman	Not Applicable	No

*Source: Adapted from Taukdar (2009, p. 45 as cited in Chowdhury and Deb, 2012, p. 3)*

## ***2.2. Mymensingh City Corporation (MCC)***

The twelfth city corporation of Bangladesh is Mymensingh City Corporation (MCC), which is the municipal government of the city of Mymensingh. The boundaries of the city corporation, composed of 33 general wards and 11 reserved wards, were set out in a gazette on January 28, 2019. The government updated Mymensingh to Bangladesh's 12<sup>th</sup> city corporation on October 15, 2018. The National Implementation Committee for Administrative Reorganization and Reform (NICAR) approved the formation of the city corporation on April 2, 2018 and the first election was held on May 5, 2019. NICAR had previously formed the Mymensingh division, the eighth in the country, on September 14, 2015. The division includes Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Sherpur, and Netrokona. The MCC was announced within three years. The total area of the new City Corporation is 91.135 square kilometers. The total population of the area is 813,114. Ekramul Haque, the mayor of the now-defunct Mymensingh Municipality, has been serving as the administrator of the newly formed city corporation.

According to the Local Government (City Corporation) Act, an administrator's term can last for a maximum of 180 days. The city has to elect a new public representative before the administrator's term ends. According to the election commission, the city corporation has 296,938 voters who exercised their franchise in the maiden MCC election on May 5, 2019. However, only councilors were elected because Awami League mayoral candidate, Ekramul Haque Titu, has already been elected unopposed. There are 33 general councilor posts, 11 seats are reserved for women. The Electoral Voting Machine (EVM) were used in all 127 polling stations (Voting in Mymensingh City Polls Underway, 2019).

## ***2.3. Satisfaction with government services***

Urbanization can foster economic growth, reduce poverty, and deal with climate change issues if adequately planned and managed. The globe is quickly urbanizing, and most individuals will live in cities and towns in a few decades. Hence, the potential of cities to provide services and build infrastructure accurately, along with their ability to handle environmental aspects and local economies, depends upon institutional capabilities, the quality of local governance, and the disbursement of financial and other resources (World Bank, 2022). Citizens' demand for urban services is increasing promptly due to the increasing rate of industrialization and urbanization (Gabriela and Elisa, 2013).

According to Osman (2016), Bangladesh is no longer behind in upgrading the delivery of public services to accommodate citizens' requirements by making them less time-consuming, effective, and accessible. While studies showed that citizens at the different local government offices are generally satisfied (Karim, 2015; Kasem et al., 2022; Afroj et al., 2021; Andaleeb et al., 2007), there were reports and studies on the dissatisfaction concerning the services they have received at local governmental institutions (The Business Standard, 2019; International Republican Institute, 2023; Bhuiyan & Islam, 2023; Cockcroft et al., 2011; Mannan, 2013; Akter, 2023). However, there are more pressing issues beyond dissatisfaction with the government services. For instance, Ahmed and Akter (2022) explored the significance of people's participation in terms of ensuring good governance, i.e., accountability, transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness in local government institutions in Bangladesh through quantitative approach and found that people are less aware of their participation rights in the different avenues of local government, which is considered a major issue behind ensuring good governance at the local level. People's participation is crucial for improving overall public service delivery in the government (Ahmed & Akter, 2022; Muriu, 2013; Osborne & Strokosch, 2022; Patel, 2011; Uddin, 2019; Ahmed et al., 2022).

According to Mahmud (2021), citizens' satisfaction is a prominent factor in urban governance since it reflects people's trust. Karim (2015) illustrated the assimilation of online-based services through e-governance along with traditional methods of public service delivery in areas such as online payments of utility bills, education-related services, registration-related services, license renewal, land records, e-mutation, and health service information that are accessible to residents, which opened up a comfortable service-receiving experience for citizens. In contrast, people have dissatisfaction with the duration and processes required to receive services from local government institutions. The time discrepancy in the Citizen Charter or website and the delivery time of information or services made citizens dissatisfied (Osman, 2016; Mahmud, 2021). Other studies assessed the various departments providing various services. For instance, Mian et al. (2013) found that Mymensingh municipality suffered from huge solid waste due to irregular waste management and unconsciousness; the responsible authority failed to manage waste. Waste management is a core function of municipalities that can be improved by ensuring the regularity of management work, building people's awareness, and improving waste treatment (Mian et al., 2013). In another study, Barua et al. (2020) emphasized the awareness-building

and participation of citizens in safety and security programs, for instance, earthquake-related programs. It is evident from the study that most residents are unaware of the earthquake vulnerability of the Mymensingh area. In this regard, they added that citizens' knowledge and consciousness about earthquake susceptibility are limited. Despite such a lack of knowledge, some residents have better assessments and are willing to volunteer to engage the community in awareness building (Barua et al., 2020).

Other pressing concerns are emphasized in various studies. For example, Basher et al. (2012) described the reality and challenges of slum dwellers in Mymensingh. They added that the urban population and the number of slum dwellers are growing, and inclusive policy is needed to provide them with municipal services. Meanwhile, Afroj et al. (2021) assessed Dhaka North City Corporation (DCC) and concluded that the urban government has to be more pragmatic, dependable, and participative, as well as recruiting adequate human resources and appropriate amenities. Due to the potential adverse effects of the massive population growth in metropolitan areas, DNCC appears to be unable to provide for the needs of the current population. Islam (2022) suggested strategies to make city corporations in Bangladesh efficient by building partnerships with stakeholders, adequate planning for land and relevant facilities, sufficiently trained human resources, proper allocation of budgets, decentralized decision-making, reducing overlapped actions of different government institutions, and upholding accountability and transparency with effective Citizen Charters.

While there are studies on the functions of local government institutions and services available in municipalities as well as city corporations in Bangladesh, there is a notable lack of studies that emphasized the twelfth city corporation of Bangladesh and how citizens evaluate the overall performance of MCC. Moreover, as a newly formed city corporation, there is a need to evaluate municipal services through citizen's assessment.

### **3. Methodology**

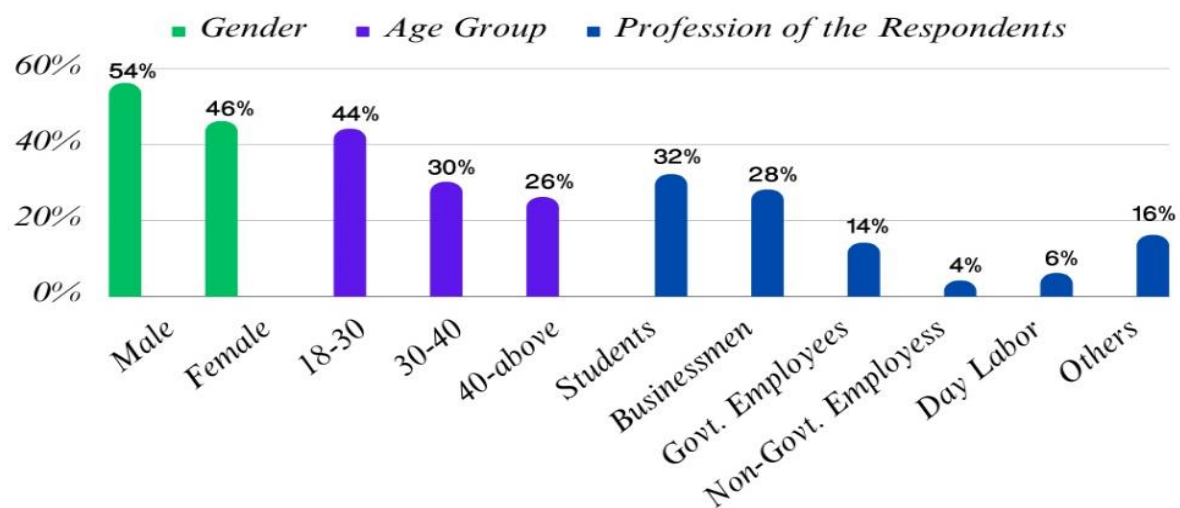
This study aimed to evaluate the services of MCC from the citizens' perspective; therefore, this research followed an exploratory approach where a quantitative method was utilized. As data collection is essential while conducting any research, primary data has been collected following the survey method with a self-administered structured questionnaire. The validity of the questionnaire was ensured by following content validity with the opinions of experts (Almanasreh et al., 2021) renowned for the assessment of municipal services in

Bangladesh about the inclusion of required items and the deletion of extraneous ones. Furthermore, the questionnaire was pre-tested before the final data collection.

The study area was the MCC, as it is easily accessible for the researcher and data collection team. The sample for this research was drawn following the convenience sampling method from citizens who availed the services of MCC. It is worth mentioning that the field survey was conducted during the pandemic in 2021; consequently, the data collection was affected. During the pandemic, the movement of citizens was limited. Therefore, the sample size of the study was comparatively small, a limitation of this study that might vitiate the actual representation of the population. Survey data were collected from hundred respondents who availed the services of MCC as shown in figure 1. The collected data were organized characteristically, and then percentage analysis was applied. Quantitative data were presented in graphs, and the responses were shown in percentages using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

**Figure 1**

*Demographic information of the participants*



*Source: Field Survey on MMC, 2022.*

The study surveyed a representative cross-section of citizens and compiled their opinions on the quality and efficiency of urban local government services. The characteristics of the samples showed that 54% were male and 46% were female. Approximately 44% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 18 to 30 years. This segment of the population had an optimistic view of city corporation's services. The younger generation stated a preference for more open communication and openness with city corporation authorities, and they



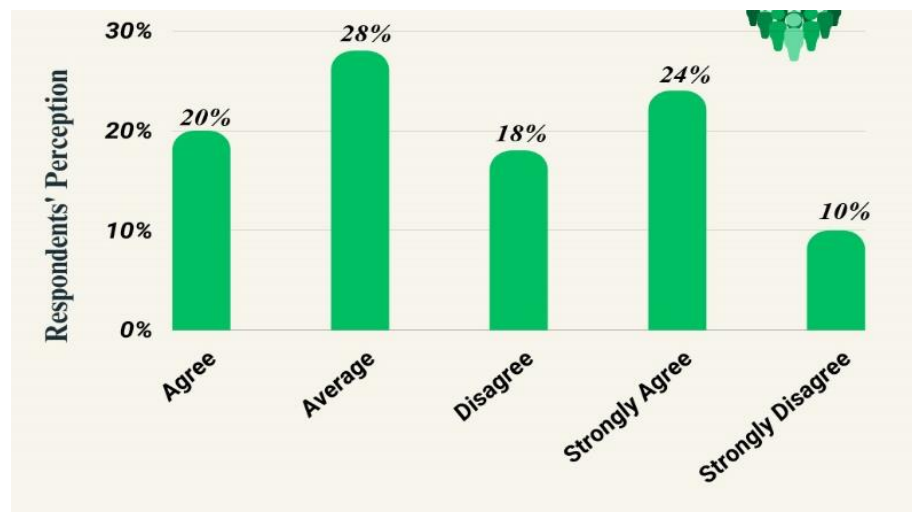
demonstrated a greater tendency to use digital platforms. On the other hand, only 26% of respondents were over the age of 41. This group showed a balanced view of city corporation's services, emphasizing the need for maintaining existing infrastructure and services rather than solely focusing on introducing new initiatives. They valued consistency and dependability in the provision of services and preferred face-to-face meetings with city corporation officials.

Students made up around 32% of the respondents, and they stressed the importance of citizen-friendly and sustainable city corporation services for its residents. In addition, almost 28% of respondents identified as businesspeople, and this group stressed the need for efficiency and cost-effectiveness in city corporation's services. Businessmen often gave more priority to services that directly affected their day-to-day operations, such as transportation infrastructure and reliable utility provisions. Only 14% of respondents were government officials. Government officials underlined the need for efficient departmental collaboration to ensure flawless service delivery. In order to promote accountability and confidence, they also emphasized the need for transparent decision-making procedures and public involvement.

The research ethics were followed in the conduct of the study particularly voluntary participation, privacy, consent before interviews and surveys, as well as respondents' confidentiality. The study assured that no participants, entities, or groups belonging to any section were abused or forced to give their assessments.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

**Figure 2**  
*MCC's Adherence to  
Citizen Charter*



*Source: Field Survey on  
MMC, 2021.*

The study explored the public assessment of MCC's adherence to the Citizen Charter while delivering services. The survey results provided vital insight into how citizens view the MCC's commitment to the Citizen Charter. According to the survey, approximately 24% of the participants strongly agreed that MCC upholds the Citizen Charter while providing services. This group of people showed great faith in the MCC's commitment to maintaining the values and norms specified in the Citizen Charter. Moreover, they articulated that MCC routinely complies with the requirements of the charter while providing services, exemplifying transparency, accountability, and citizen-centricity. Furthermore, 20% of respondents agreed with the assertion that the MCC upholds the Citizen Charter. This group indicated support for the MCC's efforts to uphold the Citizen Charter, albeit not with the same fervor as the group in strong agreement. Although there may be potential for improvement in certain areas, they agreed that the MCC typically abides by the values of the charter. In contrast, almost 18% somewhat disagreed. This group voiced some concerns over the MCC's consistency in upholding the principles of the charter such as situations where the charter's principles were not entirely followed or where there was a breakdown in communication on how the charter should be applied.

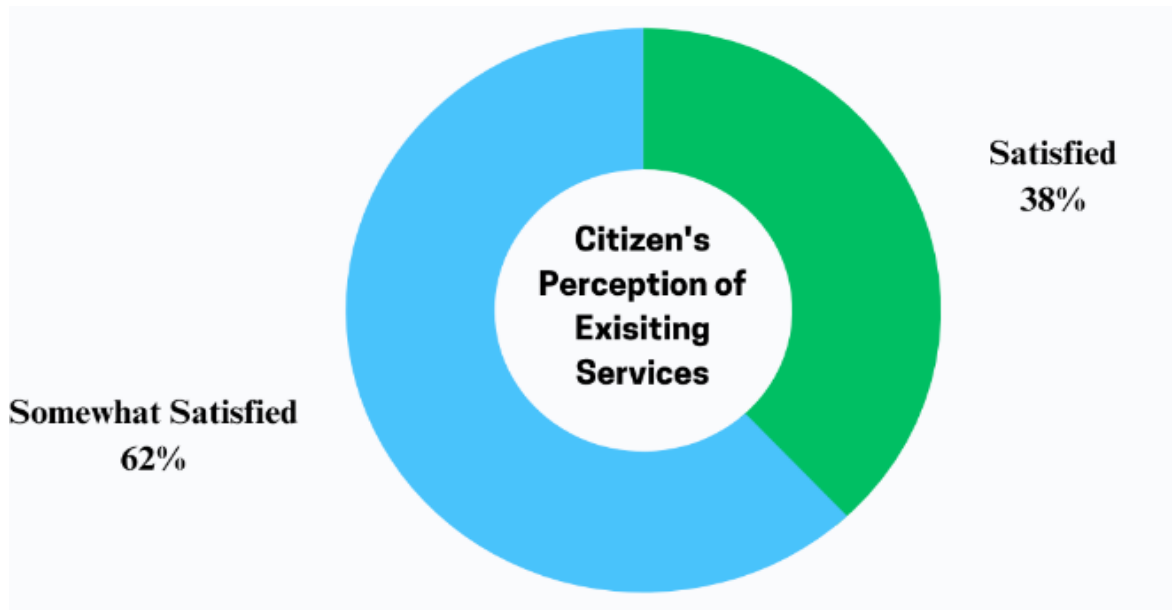
The findings on citizens' assessment of maintaining the Citizen Charter are diverse, with varying degrees of agreement and disagreement. While a notable portion of the respondents strongly agreed with the MCC's commitment to the charter, a smaller percentage expressed moderate disagreement. The results highlight the importance of continuous efforts by the MCC to effectively communicate and demonstrate its adherence to the Citizen Charter. Addressing the concerns of the respondents who expressed moderate disagreement can lead to increased citizen trust and confidence in the MCC's service delivery processes. Regular evaluation and transparent reporting of the MCC's progress in fulfilling the Citizen Charter's goals can further enhance citizen satisfaction and ensure the corporation's accountability towards its constituents.

Figure 3 shows the degree of satisfaction with the existing services of MCC. The results suggest that 62% of the respondents expressed being 'somewhat satisfied' with the services provided by MCC. This implies that a majority of the respondents have a moderate level of contentment with the current facilities and services offered by the city corporation. The remaining 38% of respondents said they were satisfied with the MCC's present amenities and services. Compared to those who are just somewhat pleased, this group

seemed to be more optimistic and indicated a greater degree of satisfaction.

**Figure 3**

*Satisfaction with the existing services of MCC*

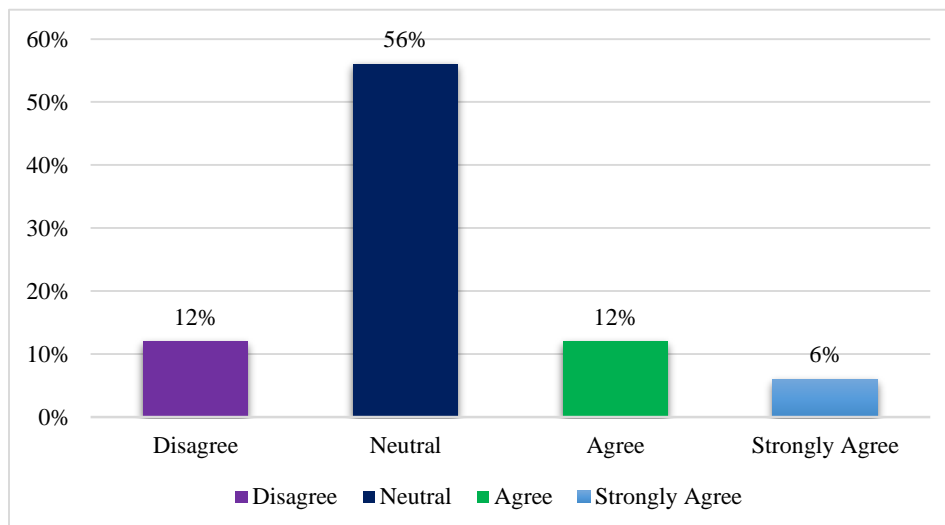


*Source: Field Survey, MCC 2021.*

Overall, the results indicate a generally optimistic attitude about satisfaction with the current services provided by MCC. The high satisfaction rating of 38% shows that a sizeable percentage of respondents were very happy with the services offered, while the group that is just somewhat satisfied offers room for development.

**Figure 4**

*Provision of instant information service delivery*

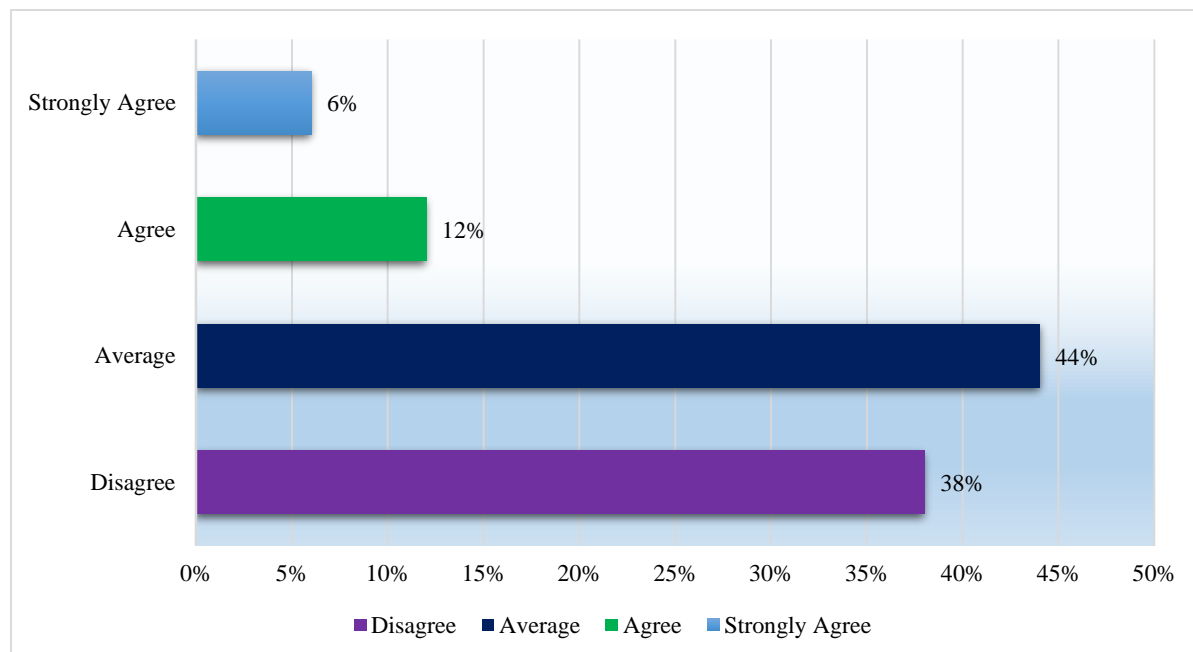


*Source: Field Survey, MCC 2021.*

The findings regarding the immediate information service delivery reflect the opinions of respondents regarding the timeliness and efficacy of the information services provided by MCC. According to the survey data, 26% of respondents agreed that MCC offers its citizens quick information services. This indicates that one-fourth of the surveyed population believes that the city corporation provides timely and effective public information delivery. However, the biggest proportion of respondents (56%) assessed the manner of information delivery to be "neutral." This neutral response suggests that more than half of respondents do not have a strong positive or negative view of MCC's immediate information service delivery. They may view the service as neither exceptionally efficient nor deficient. Conversely, 12% of respondents completely disagreed with the statement, and argued that MCC does not provide timely or immediate information services. The unfavorable answer from this group reflects MCC's unresponsiveness to provide real-time information to its citizens. Although there is positive assessment among citizens regarding MCC's instant information service delivery, there are still certain areas that need attention and improvement. The MCC should improve its information services, satisfy citizen expectations, and promote a more active and informed community.

**Figure 5**

*Citizen's engagement in service-related decisions*



*Source: Field Survey, MCC 2021.*

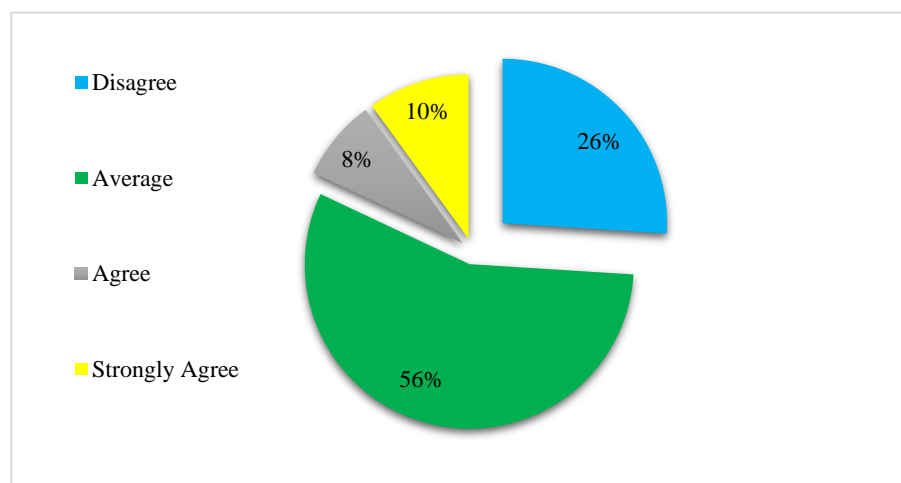
The findings on citizen participation in service-related activities of MCC indicate the level of people's involvement and participation in the city corporation's decision-making and service delivery processes as shown in figure 5. The survey data reveals that only few (12%) claimed to have participated in MCC decision-making process and service delivery activities. This suggests that a relatively small proportion of the population actively participates in city corporation initiatives. Such statistics also suggest that MCC has the potential inability to ensure active participation of the citizens in its decision-making process. Conversely, a large number of respondents (38%) disagreed that they took part in the decision-making process and service-related activities at MCC. This shows that a sizable portion of the population does not feel engaged or active in the city corporation's service delivery operations. The substantial percentage of respondents who disagreed with their involvement raises the possibility that there is a lack of opportunity to participate in the decision-making process of MCC. At the same time, it was observed that citizens' poor knowledge and communication about options for citizen engagement created the impression that there was a poor collaboration between the public and the city corporation. Relatively, the major percentage of respondents (44%) reported that they sometimes (very rarely) participate in MCC activities related to service delivery. This neutral response suggests that a considerable portion of the population has limited or sporadic engagement with the city corporation's initiatives.

The findings indicate that MCC must increase citizen participation in service-related activities. By addressing the challenges, seizing the opportunities, and implementing the suggested strategies, MCC can promote active citizen participation and create a more inclusive and collaborative approach to service delivery, resulting in more effective and citizen-cantered governance.

**Figure 6**

*Proper Service Delivery  
according to Citizen  
Charter*

*Source: Field Survey,  
MCC 2021.*

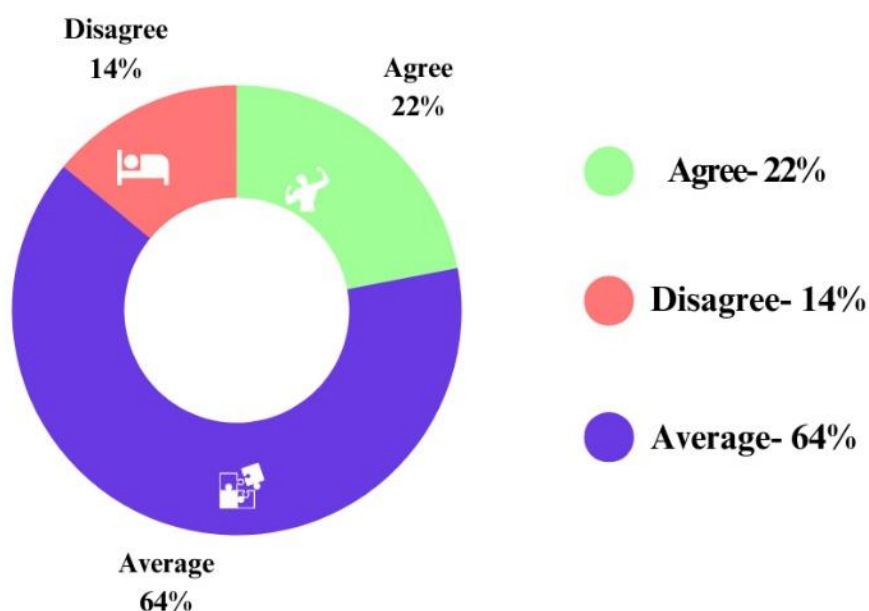


The findings on proper service delivery based on the citizen charter indicate the people's level of satisfaction with city corporations' performances and services. According to the survey data, the majority of respondents (56%) indicated that MCC's service delivery, as outlined in the Citizen Charter, is "average." This apathetic response suggests that a significant portion of the respondents does not perceive the service delivery to be either exceptional or severely efficient. In contrary, 10% of those respondents strongly agreed that MCC delivers services in accordance with the Citizen Charter's promises. This shows that a small but considerable portion of respondents are very satisfied and believe the city corporation is successfully keeping its promises. On the other hand, 26% of the survey participants disagreed somewhat with the claim that MCC's service delivery complies with the Citizen Charter. This indicates that a sizeable percentage of the populace is not totally satisfied that the city corporation is providing services in accordance with the promises made in the Citizen Charter.

The 10% of respondents who gave positive responses suggest that MCC has improved the alignment of its service delivery with the Citizen Charter. There is still work to be done since the majority noted "average" service performance and a sizable portion voiced mild dissatisfaction. In this context, MCC should seek to enhance its service delivery and make sure that it complies with the requirements established in the Citizen Charter by addressing the areas for improvement and actively involving people in the process.

**Figure 7**

*Citizen's Assessment regarding MCC's Transparency and Accountability*

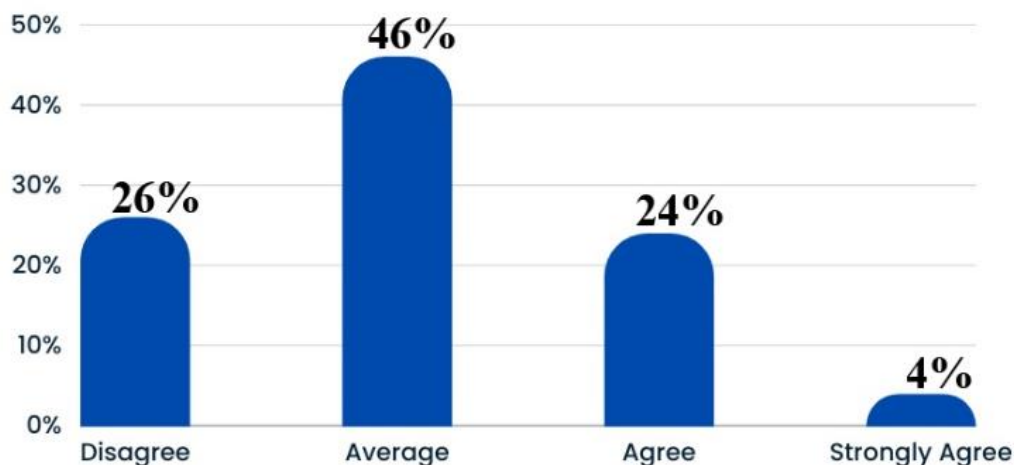


Source: Field Survey,  
MCC 2021.

Building public trust and confidence depends heavily on the degree of accountability and openness. The survey illustrates how the citizens felt about MCC's accountability and openness, and the results in figure 7 show a mixed response. The majority of the respondents (64%) conveyed that the MCC's transparency and accountability are average. This suggests that there may be opportunity for development in this area, as a significant portion of the population holds a neutral stance. In order to increase public trust and participation, it is essential for a public-facing organization such as the MCC to pursue greater levels of transparency. The 22% of respondents concurred that the MCC demonstrates an adequate level of transparency and accountability in its operations. This group has faith in the MCC's practices and public relations, as evidenced by their accord. Moreover, respondents argued that the MCC has taken some measures to assure transparency in its operations, but there is still room for improvement. However, it is notable that approximately 14% of respondents disagreed with the statement regarding the MCC's transparency and accountability. This group's dissenting opinion demonstrates that there are concerns regarding the MCC's level of transparency and accountability. In this context, the findings suggest that MCC should consider both positive and negative feedback in order to improve its practices and bolster its transparency measures.

**Figure 8**

*Proper maintenance of complain sheets of citizens*



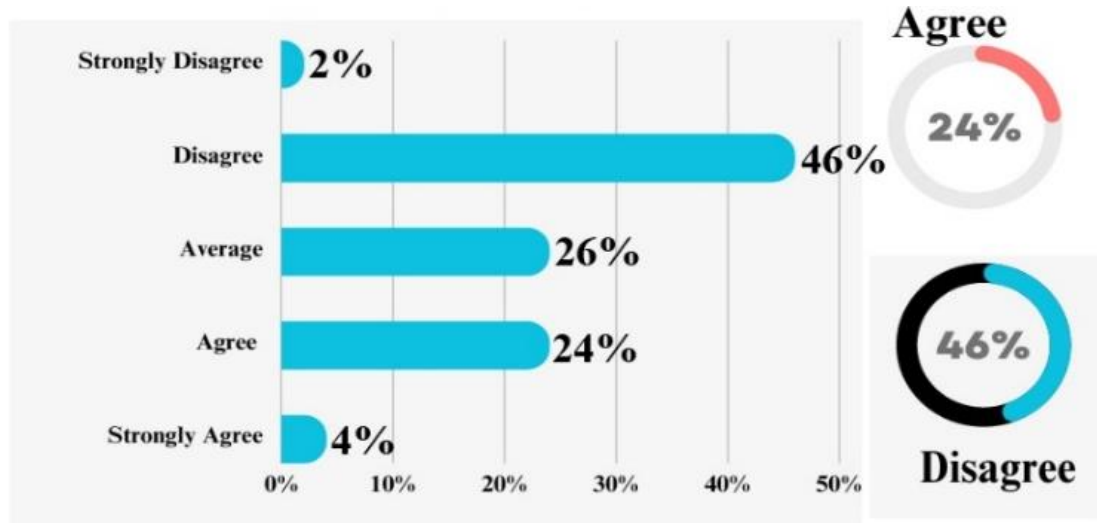
*Source: Field Survey, MCC 2021.*

The proper maintenance of complaint sheets is crucial for any organization, especially for entities like the MCC that interact closely with citizens. As shown in figure 8, the 46% of

the respondents argue that the proper maintenance of complaint sheets of citizens is average. This finding suggests that a sizable section of the population has a neutral opinion. It implies that the MCC's complaint forms have some issues. For assuring public satisfaction and speedy problem resolution, a reliable and effective complaint sheet system is crucial. Although 24% of the participants agreed that the MCC is successfully maintaining complaint sheets of citizens, 26% of the respondents disagreed about the proper maintenance of complaint sheets of citizens. The discord within this group suggests that some people have reservations and misconceptions about how the MCC handles complaints. The finding also indicates the bureaucratic complexity, mismanagement, and poor coordination of the MCC in terms of the management of citizen's complaint. Largely, the results indicate that the citizen's assessment of the MCC's upkeep of complaint sheets is conflicted. Although a significant fraction of respondents believes it to be average, a sizable portion either agrees or disagrees with the assertion. This suggests that both the good and the bad parts of the MCC's complaint sheet system need adjustment.

**Figure 9**

*Effort for maintaining public safety and civil defence*



*Source: Field Survey, MCC 2021.*

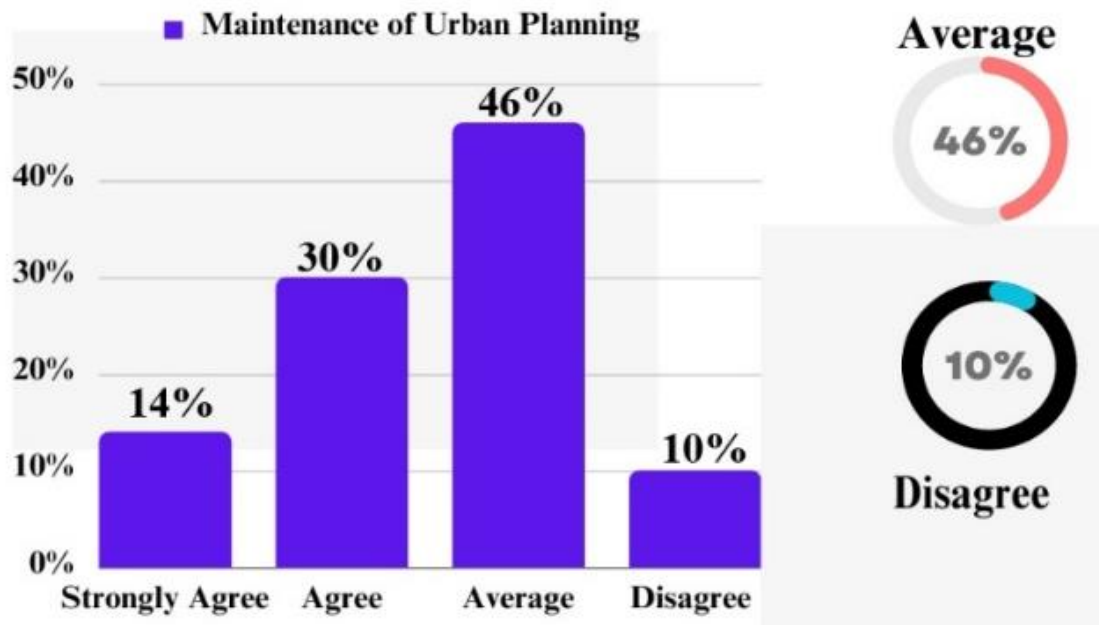
Ensuring public safety and civil defense is a fundamental responsibility of the MCC. The surveyed data in figure 9 reveal that 46% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the MCC's efforts to preserve public safety and civil defense. This is a substantial portion of the population that does not view the MCC's efforts to ensure the safety and security of the



community as sufficient. Such a high percentage of disagreement suggests that the MCC's approach to public safety may contain flaws or concerns. However, improving public safety and civil defense requires a comprehensive and collaborative effort involving multiple parties, including citizens, law enforcement, emergency services, and urban government. In order to address the issues of public safety and civil defense, the MCC can work to improve its safety measures, crisis response strategies, and public communication. The MCC can demonstrate its commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of the community it serves by actively soliciting feedback and instituting the required changes.

**Figure 10**

*Maintenance of Urban Planning*



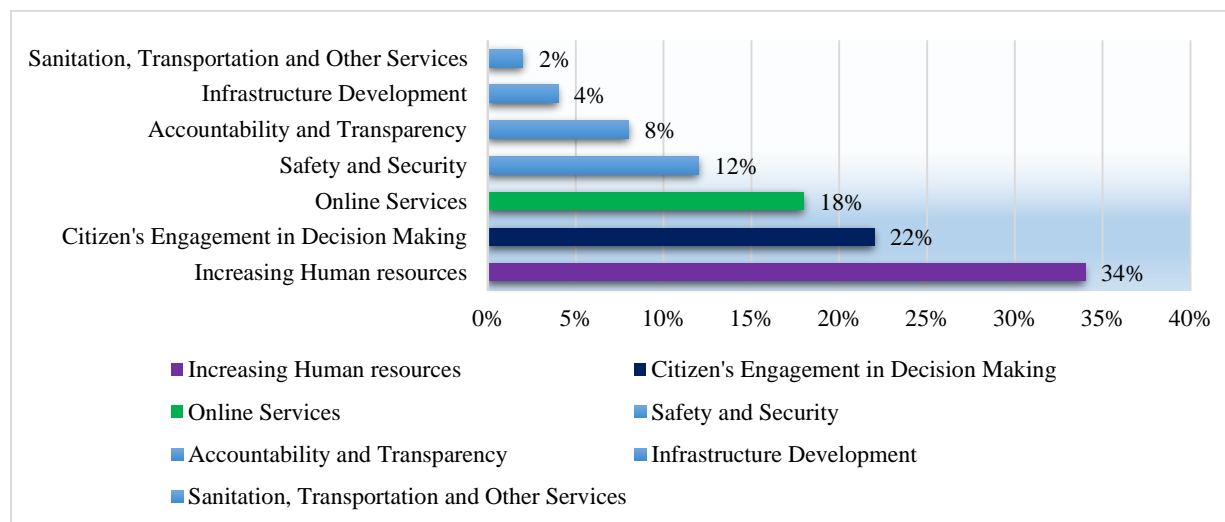
*Source: Field Survey, MCC 2021.*

MCC is responsible for urban planning in the region, and it is essential to assess how the public perceives its effectiveness in this role. In this context, the findings in figure 10 illustrate the MCC's urban planning activities based on the field survey. Out of the total respondents, 46% expressed their opinion that the MCC's maintenance of urban planning is average. This indicates that a significant portion of the population holds a neutral position, suggesting that there may be space for development in certain areas. Meanwhile, 38% of the respondents said that the MCC had done a good job of upholding urban planning. The agreement of this group demonstrates a degree of satisfaction with the existing condition of urban planning and shows that the MCC has made progress in upholding its duties. On the

other hand, 10% of the respondents disagreed that the MCC is appropriately upholding urban planning, on average. This divergent opinion suggests that MCC has enough room to improve and expand urban planning according to its urban policy. Overall, the results indicate that public satisfaction with the MCC's effectiveness in upholding urban planning varies. While a sizeable portion of respondents think MCC's urban planning operations are average, there is a sizeable group that is satisfied with the efforts. The need for more research and possible improvements in the urban planning process is highlighted, but still, a considerable percentage of people are not happy. These results can serve as a springboard for the MCC to engage in additional dialogue with the public, identify areas for improvement, and work toward a more successful and well-received urban planning strategy.

**Figure 11**

*Recommendations for enhancing services at MCC*



*Source: Field Survey, MCC 2021.*

The respondents were asked to provide valuable insights for improving services at MCC, and most of them (34%) emphasized increasing the number of officials to deliver services promptly. This statistic indicates that there may be understaffing at the MCC resulting to service delivery delays for citizens. The respondents believe that with larger staff and officials, the MCC would be able to carry out its duties more efficiently, resulting to faster service delivery to residents. In addition, 22% of the respondents emphasize the significance of involving citizens in the MCC's decision-making process. This finding demonstrates a growing cognizance of participatory governance, in which citizens desire to actively shape the policies and initiatives of their municipality. This indicates a desire for

greater openness and inclusivity in the MCC's operations, as involving citizens in decision-making can result in solutions that more accurately reflect the requirements of the community. Moreover, 18% of participants believe that the MCC should prioritize the expansion of online services. This finding reflects the increasing digitization and use of technology in the delivery of public services. Respondents may consider that offering more online services, such as bill payments, service requests, and information dissemination, can make residents' interactions with the MCC more expedient and effective. The respondents also share their thoughts on the safety and security of the city corporation's citizens, the infrastructural development of the MCC, and the accountability and transparency of the MCC's officials.

## **6. Conclusion**

In Bangladesh, city corporations are responsible for administering a variety of functions, such as urban planning, waste management, sanitation, healthcare, education, infrastructure development and many more. They play a pivotal role in enhancing the standard of life for city dwellers while addressing the issues connected with increasing urbanization, population density, and climate-induced migration and displacements. Citizens' assessment and ideas about city corporations are indispensable for achieving a sustainable city, considering citizens are the primary beneficiaries of such services. On that account, this study attempted to identify the current scenario of MCC's services and citizens' assessment of those services.

The findings exhibit MCC's efforts to maintain the Citizen Charter. However, citizens recognized the need for improvement in several areas; they felt that the MCC generally adheres to the charter's values. The majority of respondents opined that they are satisfied with the services provided by the MCC, implying that most respondents have a moderate level of contentment with the current amenities and services. Although the participation of citizens in the decision-making process of city corporations is significant for ensuring better urban governance and facilities, a notable percentage of respondents disagreed with the statement that they took part in the decision-making process and service-related activities at MCC. Conversely, citizens were dissatisfied with the MCC's efforts to preserve public safety and civil defence; that disagreement suggests the MCC's approach to public safety needed greater concern.

In accordance with the findings, this study recommends actions to enhance the service delivery at municipalities and city corporations, eventually attaining sustainable urban governance in Bangladesh. Firstly, prioritizing citizens' needs and preferences in policy formulation and planning phases through encouraging participation of citizens in decision-making processes. Secondly, awareness-building campaigns among citizens to access information and services from online platforms might reduce the time and complexities. In addition, strictly following the citizen charter will enhance the overall experience of citizens with municipal services. Thirdly, determining distinct accountability mechanisms for the utilization of resources, allocation of funds, budget preparation, and performance measurement of service delivery at city corporations. Fourthly, building capacity through partnership with NGOs and private sectors for sustainable urban planning, advancement of services, and trained human resources. Apart from building capacity, adequate budget allocation for infrastructure development has to be considered with high priority to confirm the inclusion of all for better access to municipal services. Overall, a further study could be conducted following a mixed method with a large sample size for a rigorous understanding of citizens' assessment of the city corporation's overall performance in delivering services effectively. The implications resulting from such an endeavour can help to determine how service quality can be improved by initiating pragmatic remedies, eventually achieving better urban governance in Bangladesh.

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